

A New Aberration of *Axylia putris* L. (Lep. Noctuidae)

By B. GOATER, B.Sc.

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Axylia putris Linnaeus ab. *brunnea* ab. nov.

The ground colour of the forewings is warm reddish brown, and the hindwings are smoky. Collar warm reddish brown, remainder of thorax and abdomen dark grey-brown.

Holotype: male, Mill Hill, Middlesex, 7.vii.1958, B. Goater. Rothschild-Cockayne-Kettlewell coll., British Museum (Nat. Hist.)

Paratype: male, Bushey, Herts, 1.vii.1968, B. Goater. B. Goater coll.

Current Notes

The attention of readers is drawn to the fact that while it has been decided that it is essential for the Special Index to be maintained, commencing with this volume, in future the General Index will be replaced by a fuller list of contents printed in the cover matter of each number, usually on a fly-sheet. This should be borne in mind when giving instructions for binding.

We welcome Mr. P. N. CROW, 12 Harvey House, Westcote Road, Reading, Berks, RG3 2DW, who has volunteered to take over the office of Hon. Treasurer as from 1st January 1969. Subscriptions for 1969 and the future should be sent to him at the above address. It is hoped that readers will assist him and the magazine by paying promptly, thus saving unnecessary work and postal expenditure.—Ed.

Notes and Observations

HYDROPHILUS PICEUS L. (COLEOPTERA: HYDROPHILIDAE) DEVOURING FROGLET.—While looking for Marsh Frogs, *Rana ridibunda* L., on 24th April 1968, Mr. Alfred Leutscher captured a female Great Silver Water Beetle, *Hydrophilus piceus* L., in a dyke very near Appledore, in Romney Marsh. He very kindly allowed me to keep it and I kept it under observation in an aquarium tank at my home in Clevedon, Somerset, until it died on 12th October. It lived very well in the tank and consumed large quantities of aquatic vegetation of various kinds, including broken and rotting stems. Other inhabitants of the aquarium included various small pond and ramshorn snails, lesser water-boatmen, *Corixa* spp.; small water-beetles; a few nymphs of the Common Ischnura Damselfly, *Ischnura elegans*, and four well grown tadpoles of the Common Frog, *Rana temporaria* L. When I returned on 21st June from a few days in London, two of the latter had developed all four legs and their tails were half-way towards being fully reabsorbed. On the morning of 23rd June, I was surprised to discover that the *H. piceus* had seized one of these froglets, which was dead, and had already devoured one hind-leg and was busily engaged in eating the abdomen. It fed head-downwards

among the water-weeds. By mid-morning it had completely eaten the froglet.

A few days later another tadpole which had reached the froglet stage disappeared mysteriously and I suspect that it too fell victim to this large water-beetle.

Balfour-Browne (*British Water Beetles*, London, 1958, Vol. III, pp. 3-10) states that "the imagines are omnivorous in that they eat both animal and vegetable food," but does not mention froglets among the animal food that he has seen them accept I would be interested to hear of any instances that readers of *The Record* have encountered.—J. F. BURTON, F.Z.S., F.R.E.S., B.B.C. Natural History Unit, Broadcasting House, Bristol, 8. 31.x.68.

HELIOTHIS ARMIGERA HÜEN. AND HELIOTHIS PELTIGERA SCHIFF. IN SUFFOLK.—On 3rd October, 1968, I found a specimen of *H. armigera* in my moth trap at Walberswick. During September larvae of *H. peltigera* were quite common on *Senecio viscosus* growing on the sandhills here. The sea had breached a large gap in the sandhills earlier in the year, and after the sand had been bulldozed back the Sticky Groundsel sprang up much more commonly than before.—H. E. CHIPPERFIELD, The Sheiling, Walberswick, Suffolk. 25.xi.68.

NYMPHALIS ANTIOPA LINN. IN SUFFOLK.—Two specimens of the Camberwell Beauty were seen in Suffolk on 31st August, 1968. The first was reported by Mr. G. B. G. Benson at Benacre, whilst Mr. L. W. Howard saw one on Woodbridge Golf Course. Whether these insects came over under their own power or not must remain a matter for conjecture, but it may be worth noting that each locality is within ten miles of a port into which timber is imported from Scandinavia.—H. E. CHIPPERFIELD, The Sheiling, Walberswick, Suffolk. 25.xi.68.

TWO LATE BUTTERFLIES.—On 21st November, a reasonably warm sunny day for this time of year, my wife and I visited Blackmoor Copse, the S.P.N.R. reserve near Salisbury managed by the Wiltshire Trust for Nature Conservation. The purpose of our visit was primarily to plant out a hundred or so broad-leaved willow cuttings for the benefit of future generations of purple emperors. While walking round the copse we were astonished to see a male brimstone at rest in full sun on a withered leaf still attached to a willow bush; as we approached closely it flew off down the ride and eventually disappeared over the tree tops.

But this was not the only surprise because, an hour later, as we were having lunch on the outskirts of the copse, a female comma suddenly appeared and settling on a nearby bank sunned itself for some time. Neither of us paid particular attention to its ultimate movements, but when my wife was clearing up the lunch things, she found it sitting happily at the bottom of a plastic mug feeding hard on the residue of the cider it had contained.—Major-General C. G. LIPSCOMB, C.B., D.S.O. 22.xi.1968.

SOME LATE DATES FOR 1968.—As usual, there have been several species of moths which have appeared exceptionally late in the season at my mercury vapour trap run in the garden here for the eighteenth year in